



## **Request for City Council Committee Action From the Department of Public Works**

**Date:** July 15, 2003  
**To:** Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee  
**Subject:** **Hiawatha Light Rail Transit (LRT): Approval of Screening for Traction Power Substation 12 (Cedar Riverside Station)**

**Recommendation:**

1. Approve the proposed screening for Traction Power Substation #12 (Cedar Riverside Station).

**Previous Directives:** None

December 17, 1999 – City Council approved execution of Supplementary Project Cooperation Agreement between Met Council, Mn/DOT and Minneapolis providing for Minneapolis approval of the architectural elements of electrical substations.

December 14, 2001 – City Council approved the proposed architectural screening plans for Traction Power Substations 7 (50<sup>th</sup> Street), 8 (46<sup>th</sup> Street), 9 (38<sup>th</sup> Street), 11 (south of 24<sup>th</sup> Street), and the Yard.

October 25, 2002 - City Council approved the proposed architectural screening plans for Traction Power Substations 10 (Lake Street) and 13 (Downtown East).

**Prepared by:** Heidi Hamilton, P.E., Engineer III – LRT Project

**Approved by:**

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Klara A. Fabry, P.E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works

**Presenters:** Heidi Hamilton, P.E., Engineer III – LRT Project

**Financial Impact** (Check those that apply)

☒ **No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget.**  
(If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)

☐ Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget

☐ Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget

☐ Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase

☐ Action requires use of contingency or reserves

☐ Other financial impact (Explain):

☐ Request provided to the Budget Office when provided to the Committee Coordinator

**Background/Supporting Information:**

The Supplementary Project Cooperation Agreement between the Metropolitan Council, Minnesota Department of Transportation and Minneapolis gives Minneapolis approval authority

over the architectural elements of the electrical substations. All but one of the eight traction power substation (TPSS) screening designs have been approved. TPSS 12 (Cedar Riverside) was not been recommended for approval until now due to the lack of an acceptable proposal.

The Hiawatha Project Office has proposed the planting of 15 evergreen and coffee trees to screen TPSS 12 and the signal and communications bungalow located nearby. These trees have been planted within the turnaround track located at the south end of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Exhibit A illustrates the site plan and general location of the trees.

The original LRT plans included a galvanized metal screening fence approximately 150 feet long and 8 ft. 2 in. tall for installation within the easterly quadrant of the turnaround track. In January 2001 HPO and the LRT contractor agreed that this fence would be deleted from the project scope in order to accommodate relocation of the TPSS and signal/communications bungalow. Relocation of the electrical equipment was desired in order to eliminate the need to relocate Xcel utilities, a cellular tower, and a billboard sign. While this fence would provide screening of the entire yard area adjacent to the LRT station from the neighborhood, it is of insufficient height to fully screen the TPSS or signal/communications house, which are 10 and 14' tall, respectively.

The City learned that the fence had been deleted from the project scope several months after the decision was made, and subsequently continued to reiterate the City's expectation for visual screening of TPSS 12. The alternative proposed by HPO is the planting of 15 trees within the turnaround track. The trees have been concentrated between the structures and the neighborhood approach to the Cedar Riverside Station, as well as to provide screening for the pedestrians and bicyclists traveling north on the multi-use trail.

HPO has indicated that it is infeasible to construct the fence that is shown in the original plans due to track locations and corresponding clearance requirements, the location of grounding grids for the electrical equipment, as well as concerns about metal fencing located close to an electrical substation. We consider the tree plantings a reasonable and preferable screening alternative to the metal fence and therefore recommend approval of this screening proposal.

We will request that HPO communicate this change from the preliminary design plans to the over the next few months. We will ask that special effort be made to try to reach those who participated in the public input process for design of the Hiawatha LRT.

Recommendation:

We therefore recommend that the City Council approve the fifteen evergreen and coffee trees as screening for Traction Power Substation #12 (Cedar Riverside Station).

Attachments: Exhibit A – illustration of the site plan and general location of trees

cc: Mark Garner, MCDA  
Mike Larson, Planning